



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

teachers who believe that public school conventions and traditions and school district boundary lines were fixed at the beginning of time to last unaltered through the life of the race.

In and out through this network of integration and assimilation, the home teacher weaves a thread of vital and personal contacts. She perhaps more

than any other one agency ties the homes of the neighborhood not only to the school and to each other but also to all the general civic and social agencies which those homes need. Like the function of the rehabilitated night school, like the growth of the cottage groups, her work is humanly simple because it is simply human.

## The Education of the Illiterate Immigrant

By THOMAS E. FINEGAN, LL.D.

Superintendent of Public Instruction and President of State Board of Education of Pennsylvania

AMERICA is now reaping the results of her failure to adopt a sound policy in dealing with the illiterate immigrant who has been welcomed to our shores for more than a century. From the beginning of our national life until 1882 there was no restriction whatever upon immigration into this country. Our doors were thrown wide open to all who desired to come. Through the enactment of a federal law in 1882, the Government undertook to establish a policy of selective immigration. This law had been greatly strengthened by enlarging the list of those denied the right of admission to the United States until that list included convicts, lunatics, idiots, those liable to become a public charge, contract laborers, persons suffering from a loathsome or contagious disease, polygamists, anarchists and prostitutes.

The subject of immigration has been one of extensive Congressional investigation. President Roosevelt presented the subject to Congress in broad, comprehensive messages, and laid down the general proposition that our immigration laws should be amended in a way that would enable the Government "to keep out all immigrants who will not make good American citizens."

In 1897 the immigration laws were vitally amended, the excluded classes were definitely described, and the authority and power of the Government officials dealing with immigration were materially enlarged. Notwithstanding all these efforts of the Government to restrict immigration, the number of immigrants coming into this country increased at a rapid rate, and in 1914 the number who came to America was 1,218,480.

There has, of course, been a constant increase in the number of illiterates among these newcomers until the number has assumed proportions which have proved a menace to the social, economic and political interests of the nation. During the year preceding the outbreak of the war, the number of illiterates increased in eighteen of the leading states of the country, including Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Illinois, California and Pennsylvania. An investigation by the State Superintendent of Prisons in the state of New York in 1914 showed that one-third of all the prisoners in the state prisons were aliens, and that one-half of these aliens, or one-sixth of all the prisoners in the state, were not able to read and write. The census of 1920 shows that the approximate

number of adult illiterates in this country is 7,000,000. The number would undoubtedly have been much greater had there not been a suspension of immigration during the period of the war.

The statement is made by reliable authority that one-fourth of the young men within the draft ages in the recent war did not possess sufficient education to interpret properly the orders from their superiors and were thus unprepared to become efficient soldiers. If a young man, because of lack of the fundamentals of an education in English, is disqualified to discharge his duties as a soldier in times of war, is he not also for the same reason disqualified to perform his obligation in the civil affairs of citizenship in times of peace? Can an uneducated man be more effective in civil affairs than he can be in military affairs? Should we not as a nation in times of peace prescribe intellectual standards of citizenship which are the equal of such standards prescribed for soldiers in times of war?

Students of social and political problems have anticipated the embarrassment which was bound to come to this country through the admission of these illiterate immigrants without a definite policy requiring them to meet educational standards after entering the country. For some years those giving this subject careful thought have advocated a literacy test. Senator Lodge introduced in 1896, twenty-six years ago, an immigration bill containing a literacy test. This measure proposed the exclusion of all persons between fourteen and sixty "who can not read and write the English language or some other language." The Lodge measure passed Congress in modified form, but was vetoed by President Cleveland. In his veto message, the President clearly stated his

opposition to a literacy test. President Taft vetoed a similar measure in 1913, and President Wilson vetoed one in 1915 and again in 1917. Congress passed the 1917 measure over the veto of the President, and the provisions of this Act became effective on May 1, 1917.

Under the terms of this law, all aliens are to be excluded who are over sixteen years of age, who are physically capable of reading but who can not read. This law exacts that a test shall be given each alien before being admitted, and that such alien must be required to read "not less than thirty or more than eighty words in ordinary use." The law does not exact that the alien shall be able to read English. The law is satisfied if the alien reads in English or some other language or dialect. The law furthermore exempts those from this test who seek admission because of religious persecution and certain others who are relatives of American citizens or of admissible aliens. Data is not available to show the number of aliens denied admission as a result of the operation of this law, but our general knowledge of the subject warrants the prediction that the literacy test prescribed under this Congressional Act will prove a feeble defence against the continued admission of illiterates.

In all the discussion which has taken place upon this subject, there has been a common agreement that the initial step necessary to dissipate the pending evils in this subject is to teach these illiterates to speak and write the English language. These people can not become happy, contented, useful citizens until they are able to express their needs, desires and thoughts in the common language of the country. They must also become interested in and able to inform themselves upon the social, industrial and political ques-

tions which are fundamental to the progress and prosperity of a democracy. We are therefore confronted with the problem of giving instruction to a vast army of 7,000,000 illiterate adults in the fundamentals of an English education. The question therefore naturally arises, upon whom does the obligation rest of assuming the burden and responsibility of providing educational facilities for this great body of illiterates?

All questions related to and growing out of the immigration problem are national. The national Government controls every phase of the immigration question. It determines what aliens may be admitted to this country, the conditions upon which they may be admitted, and it also prescribes the basis upon which they may be naturalized and admitted to American citizenship. The whole problem of adult illiterates is therefore a national and not a state problem. The Government should therefore recognize the necessity of attacking this problem without further delay, and should enact such laws and provide such funds as are necessary to construct an organization and execute a plan which shall, within a reasonable period of time, wipe out adult illiteracy in this country. There should be immediate action without further delay or compromise in dealing with this problem.

Had Congress responded to the call of President Grant one-half century ago, and adopted the policy which he recommended, we should have no problem in adult illiteracy in this country today. Grant's vision enabled him to see the evils which would accumulate under the policy of the Nation admitting to its shores from year to year a large body of adult illiterates. Grant saw the wisdom of insisting that all foreigners, literate as well as illiterate, who came to this

country should be trained to acquire a usable knowledge of the English language. His recommendation to Congress was as follows:

The compulsory support of free school and the disfranchisement of all who can not read and write the English language, after a fixed probation, would meet my hearty approval. Foreigners coming to this country, who are educated in their own language, should acquire the requisite knowledge of ours during the necessary residence to obtain naturalization.

There is reason to believe that the national Government will provide funds within the next year to aid the states in the accomplishment of this work. The situation is one of such peril to the social and economic interests of each state that the several states should, in my judgment, adopt a definite policy in dealing with this subject. Each state should enter upon a specific and definite program contemplating the teaching of every person within her borders to read and write in English who can not at the present time read and write such language. The problem should be approached in a serious and earnest way and under a plan which contemplates that within a definite period of time, from five to ten years, for instance, adult illiteracy shall be practically eliminated.

We make the error of thinking that adult illiterates are to be found only in the great industrial centers where our foreign population generally resides. A careful analysis of the distribution of illiterates in the states where the greatest numbers are to be found will show that such illiterates are spreading into all parts of such states. For instance, there is not a county in the state of Pennsylvania in which illiterates are not to be found. The following table gives the population of each county in Pennsylvania and the number of illiterates:

<i>County</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Illiterates</i>	<i>Tioga</i>	<i>37,118</i>	<i>855</i>
Adams	34,583	447	Union	15,850	230
Allegheny	1,184,832	62,135	Venango	59,184	1,962
Armstrong	75,568	3,260	Warren	39,992	1,278
Beaver	111,621	7,076	Washington	189,000	13,368
Bedford	38,277	1,058	Wayne	27,435	875
Berks	200,854	5,855	Westmoreland	273,568	19,388
Blair	128,334	3,191	Wyoming	14,101	235
Bradford	52,157	966	York	144,521	2,291
Bucks	82,476	2,300			
Butler	77,270	2,207			
Cambria	197,839	13,266			
Cameron	6,297	169			
Carbon	62,565	6,405			
Centre	44,304	1,057			
Chester	115,120	5,123			
Clarion	36,170	607			
Clearfield	103,236	4,066			
Clinton	33,555	780			
Columbia	48,349	1,216			
Crawford	60,667	976			
Cumberland	58,578	765			
Dauphin	153,116	5,321			
Delaware	173,084	8,104			
Elk	34,981	1,167			
Erie	153,586	6,585			
Fayette	188,104	15,142			
Forest	7,477	179			
Franklin	62,275	895			
Fulton	9,617	184			
Greene	30,894	1,212			
Huntingdon	39,848	1,409			
Indiana	81,111	4,332			
Jefferson	62,104	2,344			
Juniata	14,464	159			
Lackawanna	286,311	22,015			
Lancaster	173,797	2,245			
Lawrence	85,545	5,416			
Lebanon	63,152	1,752			
Lehigh	148,101	5,859			
Luzerne	391,001	33,377			
Lycoming	83,100	1,418			
McKean	48,934	1,056			
Mercer	94,788	5,996			
Mifflin	31,439	646			
Monroe	24,295	582			
Montgomery	199,310	7,525			
Montour	14,080	636			
Northampton	153,506	11,841			
Northumberland	122,079	5,143			
Perry	22,875	323			
Philadelphia	1,823,158	79,125			
Pike	6,818	127			
Potter	21,089	460			
Schuylkill	217,754	15,094			
Snyder	17,129	322			
Somerset	82,112	4,599			
Sullivan	9,520	378			
Susquehanna	34,763	927			

The reason that efforts thus far made have not been attended with greater success is due in large measure to the failure to proceed, in dealing with the question, on a sound, rational plan. School authorities, many charitable, philanthropic, religious and civic associations in the various cities of the several states have done much toward developing a strong sentiment to support the movement to bring all illiterates within the influence of educational facilities. These interests, however, have not been working on a definite, coördinated plan, and in many cases their activities have not only overlapped but there has been a lack of harmonious action essential to any plan which may be made successful.

The plan to provide educational facilities for several hundred thousand adult illiterates in a state must be approached from a standpoint similar to that by which we provide educational facilities for children. We should have a census which gives the names, addresses and nationality of every illiterate. Each state should be divided into zones. The size of the zone should be determined by population and geographic conditions. A director should be placed in charge of each zone. He should have in his possession a census of the illiterates within his territory. He should be the coördinating power in that zone. A citizens' committee should be organized under his direction. The school authorities, the large industrial establishments, the civic organizations, labor organizations, agricultural organ-

izations, all of the various religious organizations and the press should be represented on that citizens' committee.

The entire work must, of course, be undertaken upon a purely non-partisan and non-sectarian basis. It should be upon such a straightforward, sound, American plan as to win the cordial coöperation of every interest in the community. The director of the zone should assign to each of these interests a specific and definite line of work. The machinery of the public school system already in existence should be utilized so far as may be possible. Day classes and evening classes should be organized in these schools. The instruction should be adapted to the needs of women as well as men. Schools should also be organized in industrial plants, and in many cases it will be found desirable to organize them in certain homes for the benefit of women. In other words, bring the illiterate to the schoolhouse whenever possible, and when that is not possible, take the schoolhouse to him by organizing a class where it will be possible to reach him.

A definite record should be made of every newcomer into the country who can not read and write the English language, and the name and address of such person should be placed in the possession of the zone director. This information may be made available at the ports of entry where immigration bureaus are established. There should be a compulsory statute requiring every new immigrant who can not read and write English to receive definite daily instruction until such immigrant is able intelligently to use the English language in the transaction of his affairs. This compulsory statute should be made to apply at least to all illiterate minors who are now in this country. Their employment in industry should be

conditioned upon their receiving daily instruction in the use of English until they have acquired its intelligent use.

Teachers who know the approach to adult aliens must be employed to give instruction. The usual successful teacher in the elementary or secondary school is not properly equipped to instruct aliens. Many of these teachers, however, are qualified for this service because of their large human sympathies, their maturity and their knowledge of and experience in social problems. Many others may be trained to render desirable service in this field. Special institutes, summer courses, extension courses in normal schools, colleges and universities may be organized under the direction of those who have had extensive experience in teaching aliens and by these means a body of properly trained teachers may be provided.

America should not underestimate the importance of this problem nor the stupendous task which she faces in its proper solution. The number of adult illiterates is equal to approximately one-fourth of the enrollment of all the public schools of the nation. The great majority of these men and women are capable of being developed into useful, law-abiding American citizens. The great majority of them desire to become such citizens. The great majority of them also are here because of their faith in the ideals of America and in the principles of human justice which they believe abide in this free land. America should meet them with a sympathetic attitude and with a spirit that shall leave no doubt in their minds as to our intent and purpose. If approached in this spirit, they may generally be shown that the opportunities they are seeking may be found and that the best approach to such opportunities is through their ability to make known their desires and

to transact their own affairs. The treatment accorded them must give them faith in America and Americans through dealings which bring them in actual contact with the social and business life of the community in which they reside. This treatment of all aliens on our part is essential if America is to succeed in attaining the end so devoutly desired, which was

expressed in the words of President Wilson when he said:

You can not become thorough Americans if you think of yourselves in groups. America does not consist of groups. A man who thinks of himself as belonging to a particular national group in America has not yet become an American. . . . America was created to unite mankind by those passions which lift.

## The Political Education of the Immigrant

By TALCOTT WILLIAMS, LL.D.

Director, Emeritus, School of Journalism, Columbia University, New York City

THE prime and perpetual difficulty in the political education of the immigrant is that he has, if an adult, already received a political education, such as it is, upon which he is certain to act. You can not do much in the way of education with most adults over twenty, except development in the line of the education already received. There is a glib notion afloat—held particularly in college settlements, by immigration officers and those who, having handled immigrants by the thousand or not at all, feel sure that they know something about them—that schooling can easily be given the newcomer after he arrives. Schooling can be given, but the immigrant can not be schooled except as the very best training opens his mind. Take Carl Schurz: if there ever lived a man who seemed likely to become a full American, it was he. He learned our tongue. In its diction and in its supple and effective use, he surpassed most men of note on the platform. He sought the field for his adopted land in war and he nobly served it in peace. He supported every reform. He fought with the beasts in our Ephesus, the Senate, full of men given to getting great personal gain. He had suffered and lost for

liberty in his own land. Yet when despotism came there, in Prussia triumphant, it had his heartiest support. For freedom crushed to earth in the new-born French Republic, he had neither pity nor mercy. The American instinct as to Europe, always for self-government, he could never get. He forgave Bismarck in the full tide of his oppression of Poland. He accepted the Kaiser—ate and swallowed the young Emperor whole. He led a multitude of Americans astray by his abject admiration of the last of the hereditary European despotisms. Does anyone have the slightest doubt that if Schurz had been alive he would have been on the side of Germany in August, 1914, that he would have been opposed to having the United States enter the Great War, and that he would have stood an excellent chance of placing himself so far in the wrong that retreat would have been difficult when we went in? So with lesser men, most of all with men who came from lands recently emancipated or still under dire oppression.

Even the sons and daughters of the immigrants are not easy to educate politically. I was in contact with many of them when the shadow of war drew near. They believed themselves to be